

Department of Ecology

Water Quality Assessment for Washington

Public Review

January 15 – March 15, 2004



Why are we here?

*One of the things
Washington Citizens
have said they value most
about living here is our
clean water, which
provides fish habitat,
recreational
opportunities, water for
crops, and water to drink.*

What is the Water Quality Assessment for Washington?

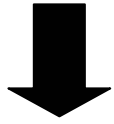
- *It's a comprehensive assessment of the quality of Washington's waters*
- *It gives the ability to better track when waters are getting cleaner or dirtier.*
- *It allows us to set priorities for protecting and improving water quality used for swimming, fishing, fish habitat, and drinking.*



How did Ecology put the Assessment together?

- *We gathered all available **water quality data** we could, from many different groups*
- *We compared that data to existing **water quality criteria** and to see if we had problems.*
- *We developed **written guidelines** to help determine when a water was polluted or showing signs of pollution.*

Where does the data come from?



**Government
Agencies**

Tribes

**Academic
Institutions**

**Watershed
Planning**

Businesses

**Non-Profit
Organizations**

**Volunteer
Monitoring**



How does Ecology Assess the data?



**Assess data using
Water Quality Standards:**

**This identifies waterbodies with
possible pollution problems
according to pollution limits.**

What do the Water Quality Assessment results tell us?



First the Good News!

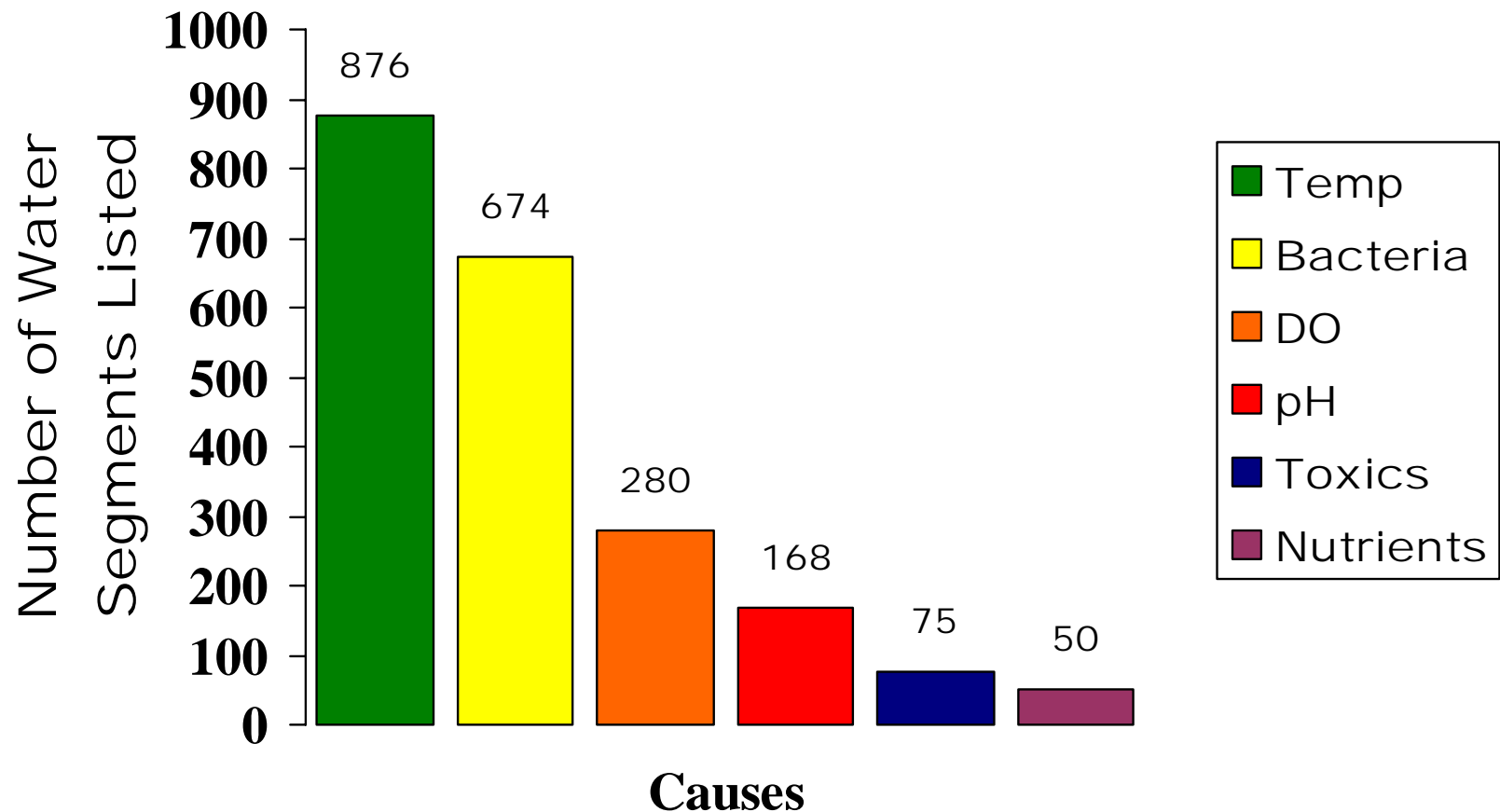
- *Many waters in the state appear to be in good health*
- *Some waters that were polluted have been cleaned up and are back to good health*
- *Waters throughout the state are being actively worked on to clean them up.*

And the not-so-good news...

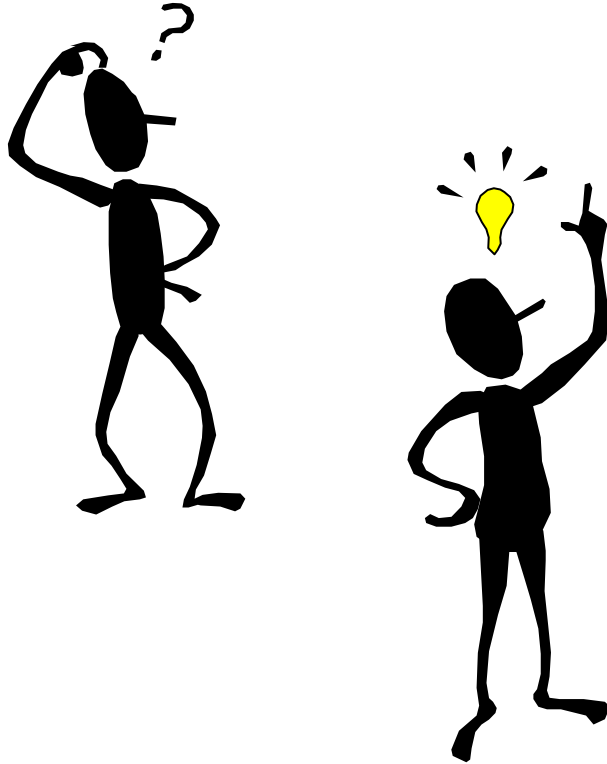
- *Some waters identified as polluted from previous years continue to be in poor health.*
- *Some waters not previously identified are showing signs of pollution*
- *Only a small percentage of Washington's total waters have been tested—about 5%*



Draft List of Polluted Waters-- Major Reasons for Listing



Why are you asking me to get involved?



We want
your
feedback!



How can I help?

Review waters you are familiar with and provide comments where you:

- **See problems with the information**
- **Disagree with the assessment results**
- **Have new data or information on the water body**

How can I submit comments?

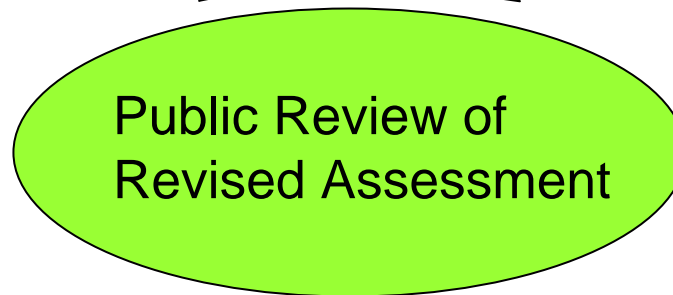
- Use the on-line form on Ecology's website
- Submit comments by email to: 303d@ecy.wa.gov
- Or, mail your comments directly to:
Ken Koch, Coordinator
Washington Department of Ecology
P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

What will you do with my comments?

Review comments on Assessment and make changes as necessary

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Add new data and information received during the review



Submit Final Assessment to EPA

What does EPA have to do with all this?

- *EPA has a responsibility to make sure all states are meeting requirements of the Clean Water Act.*
- *The Clean Water Act requires that states submit a status of their waters, as well as a list of Polluted Waters (the 303(d) list). EPA must approve the Polluted Waters List.*
- *States are then responsible for working to clean up those polluted waters.*

What are the Different Categories in the Assessment?

- 1: The water meets tested standards in that location
- 2: Waters of concern
- 3: *Default for all waters that have no data*
- 4A: The water has a cleanup plan (TMDL)
- 4B: The water has a pollution control plan
- 4C: The water is impaired by a non-pollutant
- 5: Polluted Waters – 303(d) List

Waters That Meet Tested Standards (Category 1)



- ***Waters in this category are clean for the standards they were tested for.***
- ***Placement in this category does not necessarily mean that a water body is free of all pollutants.***

Waters of Concern (Category 2)



- Some evidence of a water quality problem, but not enough to require a clean-up plan.



- Keep an eye on these waters to prevent things from getting worse.



Waters with No Data (Category 3)

- *This category will be largely empty. Water bodies that have not been tested will not be individually listed, but if they do not appear in one of the other categories, they are assumed to belong here.*

Waters that have a Cleanup Plan (Categories 4A & 4B)



- These waters have a water cleanup plan (TMDL) or pollution control plan that is expected to solve the pollution problems.

Waters Impaired by A Non-Pollutant (Category 4C)

- These are waters impaired by causes that are not addressed through a clean-up plan:
 - ☐ low water flow
 - ☐ stream channelization
 - ☐ blocked culverts and dams
 - ☐ Invasive species



Polluted Waters –303(d) List (Category 5)

- *Data shows that the water quality standards have been violated for one or more pollutants*
- *There is no clean-up plan (TMDL)*
- *Clean-up plans, or TMDLs, are required for the waters in this category.*



What is a Clean-up Plan, or TMDL?

- A water cleanup plan or TMDL is a scientific study of that water body
- Community plan of activities is developed to reduce pollution



What Happens Now?

- **Review Preliminary Assessment– Jan 15, 2004**
 - **60-day Public Review ends 3/15/04**
 - **New Data gathered during review**
- **Incorporate comments and assess new data**
- **Public Review of revised Assessment –Spring 2004**
- **Candidate List submitted to EPA—Summer 2004**
 - **EPA Approval (possible changes)**
- **2004 Final Approved 303(d) List**

Where do I find the Water Quality Assessment?

- Visit our website at:
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov>
- Information on categories can be reviewed through:
 - ☐ An Internet Mapping tool
 - ☐ A list of water segments by WRIA and category
- Contact us if you need an alternate format to the website for reviewing the assessment information.

Water Quality Assessment for Washington

*For further information
contact:*

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 - by email at subr461@ecy.wa.gov
- Ken Koch: (360) 407-6782
 - by email at 303d@ecy.wa.gov

